What Is The Treatment?

The goal of treatment is to eliminate symptoms, maintain remission and prevent relapse.

Common classes of medicine used to treat ulcerative colitis include:

**Corticosteroids** - May be used at initial diagnosis or during flares to treat symptoms rapidly. Not for long term use due to side effects.

**Aminosalicylates** - A maintenance medicine used to decrease inflammation.
   Typical medications include: **Asacol HD, Apriso, Lialda, Delzicol, Pentasa**

**Immunomodulators** - Suppress the overly active immune response that occurs in ulcerative colitis.
   Typical medications include: **6MP, Imuran, Methotrexate**

**Biologics** - These medicines target an inflammatory protein that plays a key role in the inflammatory process.
   Typical medications include: **Remicade, Simponi, Humira, Entyvio**

Depending on the location of the disease, medication in the form of enemas or suppositories may be used.

**Surgery may be required when complications arise or when medications fail.**

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**Ulcerative Colitis And Colon Cancer**

- Ulcerative colitis increases the risk for colon cancer beyond that of the general public.
- Risk is based on duration of disease as well as location and severity of disease.
- Screening colonoscopies often begin after eight years of disease.
- Colonoscopy is typically recommended every one to two years thereafter.
- While frequent screening does not reduce the chance of developing colon cancer, it does help diagnose it early and improve chances of recovery.

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**Learn More About Ulcerative Colitis**

**Connecticut GI**

**Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America**
[www.ccfa.org](http://www.ccfa.org)
What Is Ulcerative Colitis?

• Ulcerative colitis is an inflammatory condition that affects the rectum and the large intestine.
• Ulcerative colitis often begins in the rectum and lower colon but can progress to involve the entire colon.
• Inflammation and ulcers develop in the inner lining of the colon.
• Ulcerative colitis is a lifelong or chronic condition. It can be treated with medications, but there is no cure other than surgical removal of the colon.

Who Gets Ulcerative Colitis?

• Disease can occur at any age but most commonly occurs between age 15-30. There is also a peak between 60-80.
• Ulcerative colitis may be slightly more common in men than women.
• More common in developed nations.
• Disease can run in families. 20% of those affected have a first degree relative with inflammatory bowel disease.
• More common in caucasians and people of Jewish Ashkenazi descent.

Did You Know?

Crohn’s disease can affect the entire GI tract, whereas ulcerative colitis is limited only to the colon & rectum

What Causes Ulcerative Colitis?

• The exact cause of ulcerative colitis is not known.
• Researchers believe a combination of genetics, the immune system & environmental factors contribute to ulcerative colitis.

Making The Diagnosis

Either a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy will be required to make a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis.

✓ Sigmoidoscopy views only the left colon (sigmoid) and rectum.
✓ Colonoscopy views the entire colon.

Blood tests may be ordered to evaluate for anemia and inflammation.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms may vary based on the location of disease within the digestive tract but can include:

‣ Diarrhea
‣ Abdominal pain & cramping
‣ Blood in stool
‣ Reduced appetite & weight loss
‣ Bowel urgency
‣ Fatigue

Organ systems outside of the digestive tract can also be affected by ulcerative colitis and are called extra-intestinal manifestations:

‣ Eye disorders
‣ Skin conditions
‣ Arthritis
‣ Bone loss
‣ Liver disease
‣ Kidney disorders

• There may be periods of remission with no symptoms and periods of flares when symptoms are active.

FACT

About half of patients with ulcerative colitis have mild symptoms while the other half develop more severe symptoms

Complications Of Ulcerative Colitis

Ulcerative colitis affects individuals differently and symptoms can range from mild to severe. Complications can develop with more severe disease and may include:

Severe rectal bleeding: The passage of blood via the rectum in large quantities.

Toxic Megacolon: Rapid swelling of the colon from severe inflammation. This is a rare but serious complication.

Perforated Colon: Severe inflammation and ulcers can weaken the wall of the intestine causing a hole.